

PROPOSALS

Made to the
Reverend Clergy
OF THE
Arch-Deacons of *Norwich*,
Concerning the
Reformation of *Manors*.

And promoting the
Interest of true Religion and Virtue.

Together with
A Statement of the Assistance They may
afford their Parishioners for attain-
ing Religious Knowledge, and ex-
ercising Christian Devotion.

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Reverend Brethren,

YOU have received the Letter of his Grace, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; sent unto the Right Reverend the Lords Bishops of his Province: And as the Lord Bishop of Norwich, his, by the Arch-Deacons, recommended the same unto all the Clergy of his Diocese; so, being deeply sensible of the necessity of every One's endeavouring, according to his Place and Capacity, to promote the Reformation of Manners, and the Interest of True Religion and Virtue, (which is the pious Design of this Letter) I have resolved to offer unto your Consideration, some few Particulars, which I apprehend useful to this great Purpose, hoping it may put every one of you, upon further Thoughts, by what means (accommodated to the special Necessities of your several Parishes) Religion, may be brought to flourish among us.

The standing Provisions made by Law, in this Church and Kingdom, either are sufficient for the Reformation of Manners, or can be made so, only by our Le-

gillators: But the Defects charged upon our Constitution would not seem considerable, if there were not worse Defects in some Persons, and bad Designs in others.

Through these, or some other Means, the gross Corruptions of Manners are become so enormous, That the whole Nation seems justly impatient of those Oppressions which the wickedness of Men, mutually impose upon one another: For the great Sins of every Man are manifestly a Mischiefe to those he is concerned with, when he commits them.

So that, not only the Honour of Religion, and the Glory of God, but the Welfare and Safety of Men, makes Virtue and Reformation necessary, and without Righteousness there can be no Peace or Safety upon Earth.

That which I would Remind you of, in particular, is not any new Expedient, but such Things as the Laws of God and Men have always made our necessary Duty; and such, as cannot be neglected, without the Decay of Piety, and the frustrating our other Labours, for making Men Religious. I do therefore recommend

I. The setting up Religious Exercises in all private Families.

II. The strict Observation of the Lord's Day.

III. *The Teaching them, that These (and such like) are Means, in order to the making Men Religious: But, that no Man is Religious, merely for having used such Means.*

I. *The setting up Religious Exercises in private Families, is fundamentally necessary to the prevalency of Religion; and these Religious Exercises must be for*

First, Instruction; and

Secondly, Devotion: In both which, the Minister of every Parish, may be highly useful to Those of his Charge. And he is to help and assist them

1. In such Religious Exercises as are for the private Instruction of the Family: And these Exercises must be constant and frequent.

One Catechism is as useful in the Church, as one Grammer is in the Schools: And that Catechism, with which Children begin, ought to be (as ours is) very Short. But as every one who has Studied Christianity (with such Application, as becomes a Guide of Souls) has received an Idea of his Religion, from the Word of God, according to the Special Light, he stood in; when he took his Views of it, there: So I think, if every Minister (of Learning and Experience) did digest Those Apprehensions of Christianity, which are in his own Mind, according to the Method

thod of the Church-Catechism, and did Print and Communicate that Scheme (by which he is continually guided in his publick Discourses) to his Parishioners, that it might be Read by them, at all Times; They would not only have their Minds stored with the Substance of Christianity; but would have the same Apprehensions of it, that the Minister is continually inculcating upon them, in his Sermons and Ad-
vices. In what follows, I have given you a Specimen, or Example, of this, according to my own Thoughts, by which you will more easily and fully understand my Meaning.

2. The Religious Exercises for Devotion, may be in the Use of a Form of Prayer framed according to the Sense of the Lord's-Prayer, an Example of which I have added.

And having provided such helps for their Instruction and Devotion, the Masters of Families may be Advised,

(1) To Read, every Morning and Evening, some Portion of Holy Scripture, as out of the Psalms and Proverbs, and the Gospel of St. Matthew and St. Luke, &c. (as most plain and easy :) And then

(2) To use the Prayer formed by the direction of our Saviour, according to the Doctrine of his Religion; remembering always, to do both with the greatest Re-
verence,

rence, because, as in our Prayers, we speak unto the most high God, so by his Word, God himself speaks unto us, concerning the Salvation and Life of our Souls.

II. The strict Observation of the Lord's-Day, and spending it intirely, in Publick and Private Exercises of Religion, will be of excellent Use, for the keeping up in the Minds of Men, a Sense of God, and of their Duty; for the enlarging their Knowledge, exciting their Affections, and fixing their pious Resolutions.

And these Exercises of Religion may be so Varied, that they will not be tedious to any at first; but will be Delightful to all that are accustomed to them. And if in the Family, sometimes One, and sometimes Another, be employed to Read; so that none be meer constant Hearers, when the Family are together: And if each Person be permitted, otherwhile to Retire and Exercise himself, according to his personal Inclination, this Variety will prevent the Fatigue, which might discourage, by too long Attendance of All the rest, upon what any One does; and by their Confinement too long, to any one Exercise.

If Children and Servants were all their Lives, and in all Places, accustomed to such Religious Exercises, a strong Sense of Religion would be established in their Minds: And their Consciences would startle at

at those Temptations, which for want of such Tenderneſs, they are Ruined by. By this Preparation, they would be enabled to Proſit, by the Publick Preaching; which for want of ſuch fundamental Inſtruction, many are incapable of, and for want of ſuch Conſcience, they have little Regard unto.

'Tis very much thro' the neglect of this Family-Religion, that Immorality and Profaneſs has ſo much prevailed among us; and 'tis by reſtoring theſe Religious Exercises in Families, that the Reformation muſt be made.

III. The Teaching every one, that Theſe (and ſuch like) Religious Exercises are neceſſary Means of Religion, but not the whole of it, or what will alone make Men truly Religious, is alſo requiſite. *Hebr* 13. *18.* *12.* *11.* Chriſti-
anity is Living Honeltly (i. e. Soberly, Righteouſly and Godly) in all Things. A Temper of Heart, and Courſe of Life, conformable to the Eternal Rule of Righteouſneſs (the Law of Heaven) is the great End, and Aim of God, in ſetting up Religion, and is the neceſſary Preparation for Happineſs. So far only, as the Reaſon of our Minds is reconciled to the Divine Law of Righteouſneſs; and ſo far only, as Men Live with Delight, according to thoſe
Mea-

Measure; so far, and no further, are they truly Religious. But, He that performs the Religious Exercises before said, or any others, without making Conscience of Religious Living (doing Right to God, his Neighbour and Himself) shall be numbered among the Unrighteous which shall not inherit the Kingdom of God; and shall have his Eternal Portion with the Pharisees and Hypocrites.

Our Families therefore, being Examples of these Religious Exercises; we may Advise (on just Occasions, and with prudent Seriousness) all Masters of Families, and Teachers of Schools (as by Law they are obliged) to Instruct Children in the Catechism, and to Inculcate upon them the necessity of Living according to the Letter of the Commandments; and our Admonitions will not be Vain, when in our daily Prayers to God for them, our Request is, That our Endeavour for their Edification and Salvation, may be effectual through the assistance of his Grace: And no Man, who considers the Account He must give of those Souls committed to his Care, can without the most sensible Concernment for Them, and for Himself, present such Supplications unto God.

*And God grant we may All so Take
heed unto our Selves, and to our Do-
ctrin, that we may both Save our Selves,
and those that hear us. I am*

Your Friend and Brother

JOHN JEFFERY,

Arch-Deacon of Norwich.

THE

The Sum and Substance of Christianity.

HE that would receive Benefit, by the publick Instruction of the Ministers of Religion, must keep in Mind the *Principles* of that Religion which is the Subject of their Discourses. *Jan. 1, 27.*
And that I may *Assist* those who attend upon my Ministry, as far as 'tis in my Power; I shall lay before them very briefly, The *Substance of that Doctrin*, which I am constantly explaining and inculcating among them.

True Religion is Obedience to the Laws of God, and that Religion is made known unto Men

I. By *Natural Reason*: And

II. By *Supernatural Revelation*.

1. The true Religion is manifested unto Men, by *Natural Reason*, in the use of which, we may come to the Knowledge of God, and Goodness; by observing the Structure of the World, *Rom. 1. 19, 20.* and the Events of Providence. *Rom. 2. 14, 15.* For, the Nature of Things, as perceived by

the Reason of our Minds, directs us to the *Rule of Righteousness*; the moral Perfections of God (his Goodness, Righteousness and Truth) being transcribed into the principal Commandments of the Moral Law: And the Religion of Men being the *Imitation of God*: The doing all the Right they can to him, to their Neighbours and Themselves.

Rom. 1.

21 — 32.

But in time, This true Notion of Religion, was overwhelmed by *Polytheism, Idolatry, Superstition, and Immorality*: And therefore it was necessary, That

Gen. 1. 1.

2.

The true Religion should be made known to Men, by *Supernatural Revelation*: And the

Pf. 147.

19, 20.

Exod. Lev.

First State of Religion, which God set up by *Supernatural Revelation*, was that among the Jews consisting of Laws *Moral, Ceremonial and Judicial*. The

Substance of their Religion was con-

tain'd in the *Moral Law*: The *Ceremo-*

nia Law related to their *Ecclesiastical*

Polity: And the *Judicial Law* related to

their *Civil Polity*, which *Jehovah*, their

King, and God set up among them.

This *Jewish State* of Religion is called

the *Old Testament* or *Covenant*, as the

Christian State of Religion is called the

New Testament or *Covenant*. But the

Jewish Religion, was at length Cor-

rupted

23.

rupted by the mixture of *Polytheism, Idolatry and Superstition*, accommodated to it; and a better State of Religion was necessary for the making the *World* truly Religious. Therefore the

Second State of Religion which God set up by *supernatural Revelation*, was that among *Christians*; and as this State of Religion is the *Kingdom of God*, of which we are Subjects; so, 'tis our Religion, and our Duty as Subjects of this Kingdom of God; to obey the *Laws* of the Kingdom to which we belong. This State of Religion was set up by the *Messiah*, our Lord and King (or Law-giver, Saviour and Judge) and the Records of this is the *New Testament*. Therein we have the *Institution*, the *Demonstration*, and the *Vindication* of Christianity: And this is to be the universal Religion of all Mankind.

Whenever this Religion shall be Corrupted by *Paganish Superstitions* accommodated to it; those Corruptions must be cast out, and the Religion must be reduced to the original and divine Standard in the *New Testament*.

The *Doctrine* of this Religion we must study, because we Profess it; and hope to be Saved by it: And in the *Doctrine* of Christianity (the Sum of which is contained in the *Church Catechism*) there is

I. The

Heb. 6.1,2 I. The *Fundamental* and *Initial* part; which comprehends *Repentance* and *Faith*.

II. The *Substantial* and *Chief* Part; which is *Obedience* to the *Commandments* of *God*, as explained by *Jesus Christ*. And

III. The *Instrumental*, and *subordinate* Part; which contains *Prayer*, and the *Ministry* of the *Word*; the *Sacraments* of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*.

I. The *fundamental* and *initial* part of *Christianity* comprehends *Repentance* *Al. 20. 21* towards *God*; and *Faith* towards our *Lord Jesus Christ*.

1. By *Repentance* we are to understand the forsaking all *false Religion*, and the forsaking of all *vicious Practices*.

Tit. 2. 12. The *Purport* of which, is set forth in the four first *Questions* of the *Catechism*.

2. By *Faith* we are to understand the receiving the *Doctrine* of *Christianity*, as containing the *Principles* and *Measures* of *religious Life*: And the *Apostles Creed* contains the *Matter* of that *Faith*, which may be *Distinguished* into these two *Grand Articles*, viz. That *this Religion* is of *God*: And that *they shall be happy* who *live* according to *this Religion*. *Heb. 11.6.*

1. One grand Article is, That this Religion is of God. So we believe, who profess Christianity as the Religion which God the Father taught, by the Son; I believe in and confirmed by the Holy Ghost: And God the therefore we Christians are Disciples of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; who is the Author of our Religion. This divine Person Jesus Christ (who is the Author of our Religion and of our Salvation) is the only Mediator between God and Men; and has all Power in Heaven and Earth given unto him. By him, God the Father exercises his Dominion over us; and by him we Sinners are Reconciled and have Access to God the Father. The principal Doctrin of meer supernatural and positive Revelation is This, concerning the promised Messiah; and in this, all other Doctrins of meer positive Revelation necessary to our Salvation, are comprehended. This is the Substance of the former part of the Creed.

2. The other grand Article is, That They shall be happy who live according to this Religion. Christians who (in Fellowship one with another in the Church of God) live according to their Religion, are assured of the Pardon of their sins; the full effect of which, is their Resurre-

ction

Mat. 10. 42. *Thou to a blessed Immortality; and this is*
the substance of the latter part of the
Creed. & Catech. Qn. 5. & 8. And
these two, Faith and Repentance, are the
Fundamental part of our Religion.

II. The *substantial and chief* part of Christianity is *Obedience to the Commandments of God, as explained by Jesus Christ.*

The *Commandments* of God are contained in the *Decalogue.*

The *Explication* of them by *Jesus Christ* is contained in the *Sermon on the Mount*, and other *Discourses of Christ*, and his *Apostles.*

The *Commandments* of God are contained in the *Decalogue*, where, in the

First Commandment, God forbids the *Polytheism* of the *Heathens*, i. e. the worshipping more, or others beside *Jebovah* the *one true God*; whether under the *Notion of Mediators* or otherwise, *Thou shalt have no other Gods, &c.*

In the *Second Commandment* God forbids the *Idolary* of the *Heathens*, or the representing God by *Images*, in which, the *Spirits* to be worshipped were reputed to dwell, after the *Consecration* of those *Images*, *Thou shalt not make to thy self any Graven Images, &c.*

In the *Third Commandment* God forbids the *Blasphemy* of false *Swearing*, or any such like *Profanation* of his *Holy Name.*

*Thou shalt not take the Name of
the Lord thy God in vain, &c.*

In the Fourth Commandment God ^{Gen. 2. 2.}
requires the spending one Day in seven ^{Deut. 5. 12.}
in Religious Exercises, to the Honour of ^{AD. 20. 7.}
him who is the Creator and Governour
of the World. *Remember the Sabbath-*
day, &c.

These Commandments of the First
Table, contain the Elements of our Duty ^{Deut. 5. 5.}
towards God, the sum of which is, *To* ^{Mat. 22.}
love him with all our Hearts, &c. ^{36. 37. 38.}
^{Deut. 13.}

The Six next Commandments of the ^{2. 3.}
Second Table, contain the Elements of
our Duty towards Men. The sum of ^{Lev. 19. 18.}
which is *To love our Neighbour as our* ^{Mat. 22. 39.}
selves; and to do unto others, as we would ^{Rom. 13.}
they should do unto us. ^{9. 9. 10.}
^{Mat. 7. 12.}
^{Mat. 22. 40.}

In the Fifth Commandment God ob-
liges Children to *Requite their Parents* ^{Lev. 19. 3.}
with all the Effects of Love, Grati- ^{1 Tim. 5. 4.}
tude and Reverence; *Honour thy Father*
and thy Mother, &c.

In the Sixth Commandment God for- ^{Gen. 9. 5, 6.}
bids the taking away the *Life* of any ^{Rev. 13. 10.}
innocent Person by Design, or of any
guilty Person without Authority, *Thou*
shalt do no Murder.

In the Seventh Commandment God
forbids the defiling our Neighbours ^{Lev. 20. 10.}
Wife, and her suffering her self to be ^{Heb. 13. 4.}
defiled, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*

In the Eighth Commandment, God forbids the detaining from another any *Gen. 44. 8.* of his Goods, contrary to Right, with-
Eph. 4. 8. out his Knowledge, or against his Will, *Thou shalt not Steal.*

In the Ninth Commandment, God forbids any false *Testimony* in Cases of
Dent. 19. 16 — 21 Judicature or otherwise, *Thou shalt not*
Rom. 13. 9. bear false witness.

In the Tenth Commandment, God
Rom. 7. 7. forbids even the Designing or Willing-
ness to commit any of these Injuries,
which he has forbidden us to Do. *Thou*
shalt not Covet, &c.

These are the Commandments of
God, and Rules of a Religious Life,
V. Catech. Qu. 7. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Secondly, The *Explication* of them
by *Jesus Christ*, is contained in the *Ser-*
mon on the Mount: Where we have

Mat. 5. 1. An *Exhortation* to Religious Obe-
Mic. 6. 8. dience, of which the Moral Law is the
Rule: And in which true Religion ever
did consist.

Mat. 6 & 7. 2. A *Caution* against *Pharisaical Hy-*
v. 1 — 6. poerisy, which is made up of the *Osten-*
tation of Piety, and the *Licentiousness*
of Sin.

Mat. 7. 7. 3. An *Admonition* concerning the ne-
cessity of living according to that *Ex-*
hortation and *Caution*.

And

And this Obedience to the Moral Law as explained by Jesus Christ, is the Substance of Christianity.

III. The Instrumental and subordinate part of Christianity is either

First, *Moral*; or

Secondly, *Ritual*.

First, The instrumental part of Religion which is *Moral*, contains in it

1. Prayer; and

2. The Ministry of the Word.

1. Prayer is a *Means* as well as an *Act* of Religion, and must be suited to the Doctrine of Christianity, that the Worship may be Christian. The Lord's Prayer is agreeable to that Doctrine; and by it, we are directed

To address our Supplications to God, as the *Best* and *Greatest* Being; the Creator and Governour of the World. Our Father which art in Heaven. And the Petitions we make to him are

(1.) That God may be duly *Honoured*, by all reasonable Creatures, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

Isa. 6. 2.

Rev. 4. 8.

(2.) That Christianity (the true Religion) may be receiv'd by all Mankind; *Thy Kingdom come.*

Mat. 1. 14.

Mat. 21.

43.

(3.) That all Christians may live according to the Religion they profess; *Thy Will be done in Earth as 'tis in Heaven.*

Eph. 4. 1.

Phil. 1. 27.

These three Petitions are for the
Glory of God: Those three which fol-
 low, are for the *Welfare of Men*, viz.

Prov. 30. 8. (4.) That we may have all the neces-
Mat. 6. 33. sary Accommodations of Life; Give us
 this day our daily Bread.

(5.) That the Punishment of our
Mat. 1. 4. Sins may be with-holden, upon our
Mat. 6. 14. Repentance; Forgive us our Trespases,
 &c.

(6.) That Relapse into Sin may be
Jan. 1. 13. prevented, by the Grace of God, Lead
14. 5. us not into Temptation, &c.

After which Desires presented unto
 God, we Conclude with an Acknow-
Rev. 4. 11. ledgment of the Goodness and Greatness
 of Him to whom we Pray; For *this is*
the Kingdom, &c. V. Catech. Qn. 12. 13.

2. The Ministry of the Word is exer-
2 Tim. 4. cised by an Order of Men Authorised
1. 2. for that Purpose: And this is the *Ordin-*
2 Cor. 2. *ary Means* God has provided for the
15. 16. Information, Persuasion, and Conso-
 lation of Christians.

These are *Moral*: For, 'tis a natu-
 ral Truth, That we must make our
 Prayers to God, and learn our Religion
 from Him.

Secondly, The *Instrumental* part of
 Religion which is *Ritual*, is the *Sacra-*
1 Cor. 10. *ments* of Baptism, and the Lord's Sup-
2. 3, 4. per. *V. Cat. Qn. 14. 15, 16.*

1. By

1. By Baptism (or washing with Water, into the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, we are admitted Disciples of Christ, and Professors of the Christian Religion; which God the Father Taught by the Son, and confirmed by the Holy Ghost. V. Cat. Q. 17. 18, 19, 20.

2. By the Lord's Supper, we remember *Christ*, and his *Death*, at, and by which (as a *Federal Rite*, and the great *Propitiation*) the New Testament or Covenant (*i. e.* the *Christian Religion*) was set up. And as by the *Death* of *Christ*, we are absolutely *obliged*, to Repentance, and the Obedience of a Holy Life; and conditionally *assured* of Pardon and the Resurrection to a Blessed Immortality: So by the *Solemn Remembrance* of *Christ*, and his *Death*, that *Obligation* and *Assurance* are *Reinforced*. V. Cat. Qu. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

These are the *Fundamental*, the *Substantial*, and the *Instrumental* Parts of Christianity; and in *these* the whole of Religion is contained.

The *External Circumstances* of Order and Decency are provided for, by the Laws of every *Christian Church*: And every *Private Christian* is to study the publick Peace, and his own Edification:

FOR

